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# SNAKE RIVER Birds of Prey

NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
AREA



BLM Junior Explorers  
Activity Booklet



U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Land Management  
December 2001

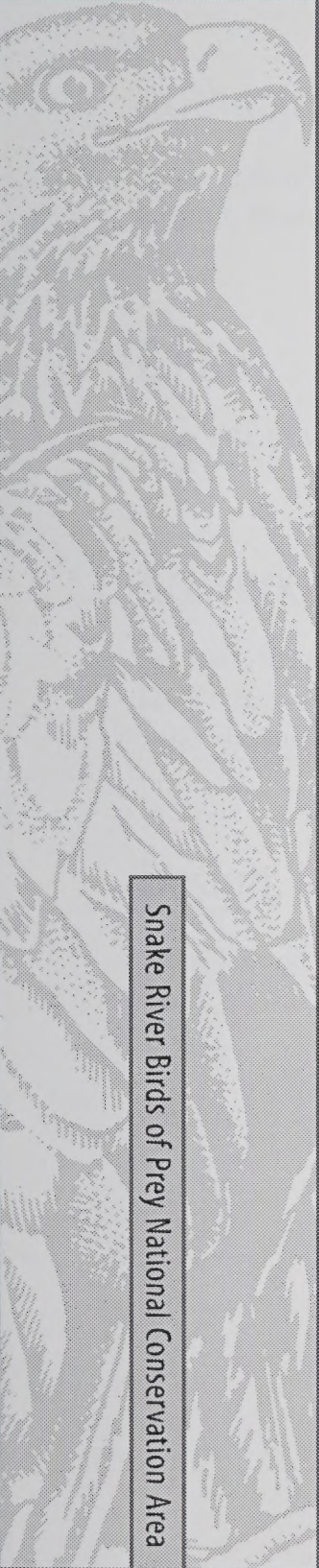




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Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

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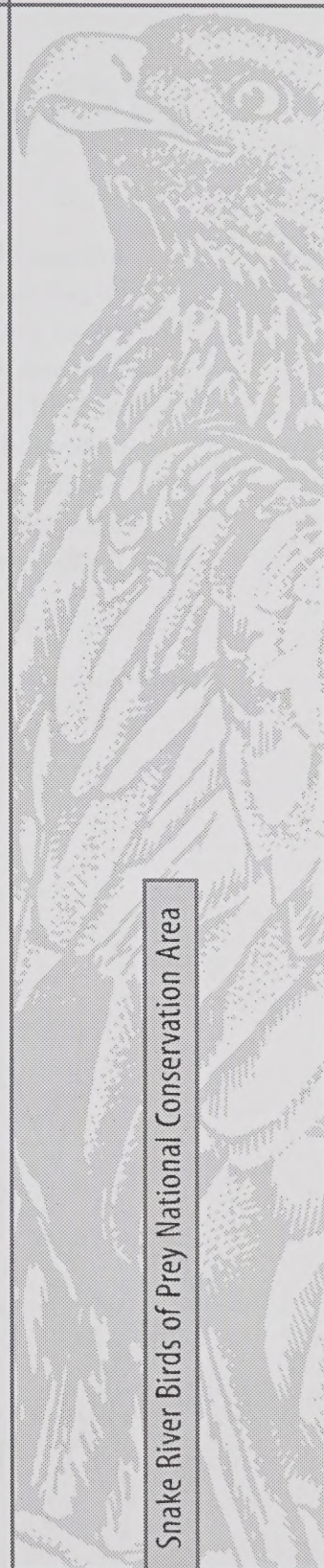
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# Welcome Junior Explorers!

Are you between the ages of 9 and 13?

Do you enjoy spending time outdoors learning about nature?

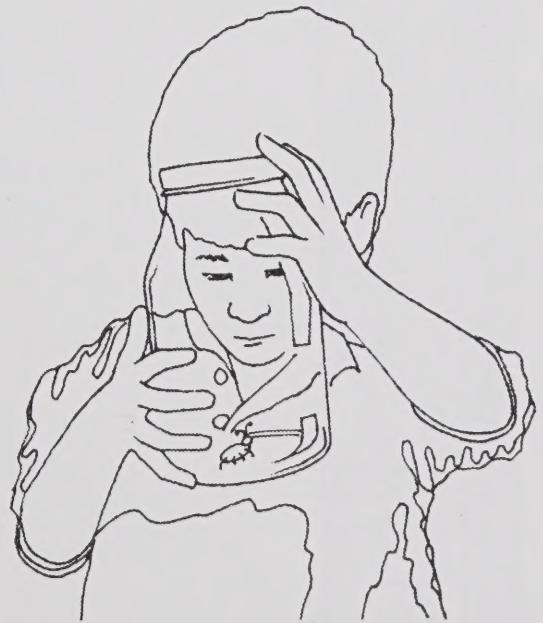
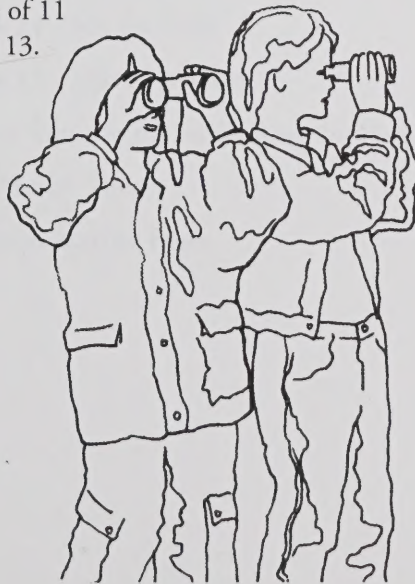
Are you willing to help care for our natural resources?

If your answers are yes, then the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would like to invite you to join our Junior Explorers program. To become a BLM Junior Explorer, you will need to complete . . .

- ❖ at least four of the activities in this booklet if you are 9 or 10 years old, or
- ❖ at least seven of the activities in this booklet if you're between the ages of 11 and 13.

Once you've completed the required number of activities, you can take this booklet to the BLM Office at the area you are visiting. There you can state the Junior Explorer pledge and have a BLM staff person or volunteer sign the certificate at the end of this booklet. You will also receive a badge and other gifts to show everyone that you are now an official BLM Junior Explorer.

So stop, listen, and take a closer look—let's explore!



Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area



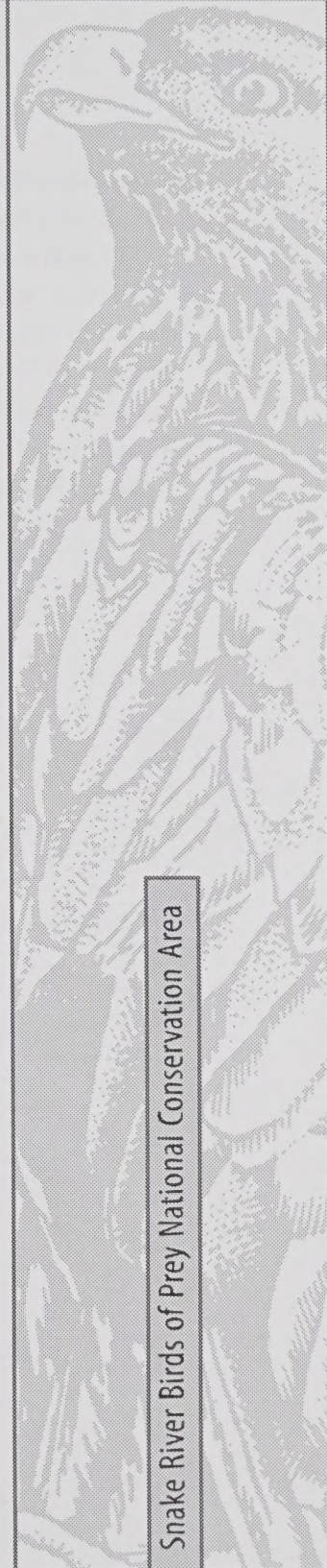






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# Introduction

Welcome to the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA). This special place has one of the largest groups of nesting birds of prey in America. Birds of prey, also called raptors, are birds that kill and eat other animals.

The NCA contains about 186,000 hectares (485,000 acres). It is on public land—land

that belongs to everyone but is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM takes care of more than 107 million hectares (264 million acres) of public land—nearly one-eighth of the land in the United States! Most of these public lands are in the Western States shown on the map below. As a BLM Junior Explorer, you can help BLM care for these public lands.

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area









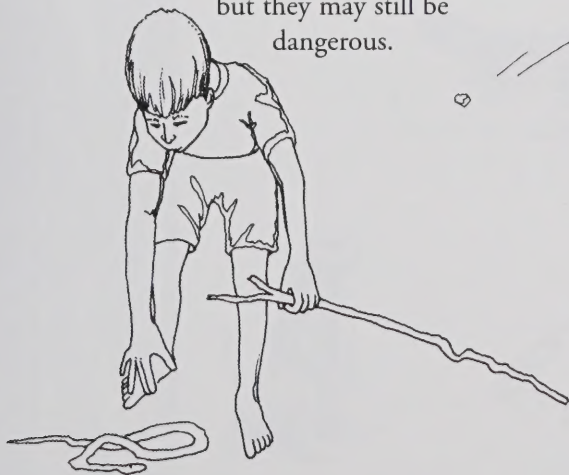
# Safety First

The most important job of a BLM Junior Explorer is to learn about safety. Following these rules will help you have a fun and safe visit:

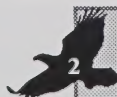
- ❖ Don't climb or walk along cliffs. The rocks may crumble and fall out from under you. It is also dangerous to camp where rocks can fall down on you from above.
- ❖ Stay away from fast-moving water, slick rocks, and places where the ground slides under your feet. When fishing, boating, or rafting, always wear a life jacket.
- ❖ Watch out for plants like poison ivy, which is common along the Snake River. Watch out for poisonous animals, too. Rattlesnakes and scorpions make their homes under rocks in the area.
- ❖ Stay away from all snakes. There are many kinds of snakes that are not poisonous, but they may still be dangerous.
- ❖ Keep a safe distance from any animals that you see and do not try to feed, pet, or collect them.
- ❖ Be prepared. The weather in the area can change quickly. The wind can be chilly, so it's a good idea to bring extra clothes. Summer days can be very hot, so be sure to have a hat, sunscreen, and plenty of water. You should also bring a first aid kit. In addition, let someone know where you plan to be and what time you expect to return.

☐ Check the box if you have read the safety rules above or someone has read them to you.

You have just completed your first step to becoming a BLM Junior Explorer at the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA.



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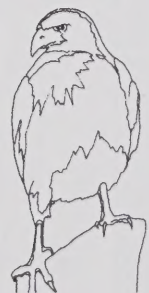
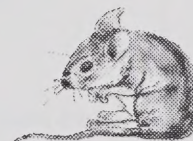
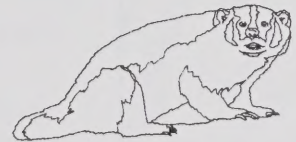




## I Spy

The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA is home to many different raptors (hawks, eagles, vultures, owls, falcons), and to other animals, too. As you explore the area, keep your eyes and ears open. Look up, down, and all around. Try standing still in one place for a minute. Use binoculars if you can. You might be surprised by what you find.

Below are pictures of animals living in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. Some live here all year, while others only live here for part of the year. Circle the animals you see during your visit.



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## Flying High

Chances are, when you see raptors in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, they will be flying high above you. A good pair of binoculars, along with a field guide, may help you identify them. Remember, you

can also find clues in the shape of a raptor's wings and tail and in the way that it flies. Draw a line from the raptor shape in the column A to its matching description in column B.

### Column A



### Column B

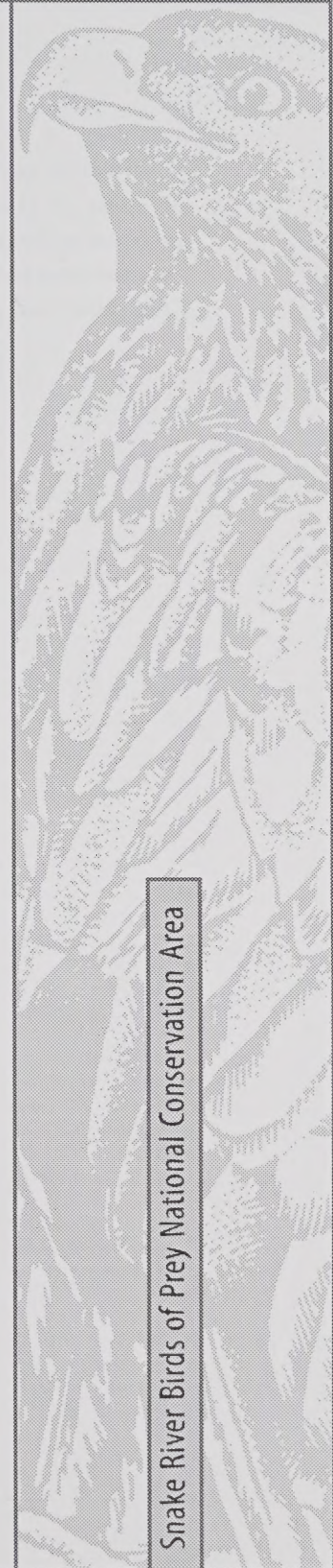
These large raptors have wide wings and a rounded, wide tail. They soar for a long time without flapping. Their wings seem still as they move along warm, rising air currents called thermals. Example, red-tailed hawk.

Often called "true hawks," these raptors are medium-sized birds with rounded wings and a long tail. They flap their wings a few times and then glide. They can move quickly through forests in search of prey. Example, sharp-shinned hawk.

These raptors have long, pointed wings that slant backward so they can do high-speed dives. They also have a narrow tail and can flap their wings so quickly and strongly that they can fly in place. Example, prairie falcon.

These raptors have long, wide wings and a large, rounded tail. They are the largest raptor in the NCA and can soar for a long time without flapping. Example, golden eagle.

These raptors have medium-length, rounded wings and a short, rounded tail. They also have a large, rounded head and eyes. They flap their wings steadily and are active mainly at night. Example, great-horned owl.



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## Try This! **THIS!**

- ❖ Do you know how many times a minute a hummingbird flaps its wings? On average, it's about 4,000 times. See how many times a minute you can flap your "wings"—your arms, that is!
- ❖ A western screech owl can spread its wings out about 60 cm (2 ft), while the bald eagle can spread its wings out about 2–2.5 m (6–8 ft). Spread your arms as wide as you can. What's your "wingspan"?

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## A Desert? Here?

You probably think of a desert as a hot, dry area where very few plants and animals can live. Well, you're only partly right. A desert is dry—it usually receives less than 25 cm (10 in) of rainfall a year. But a desert isn't always hot, and there are certainly plenty of plants and animals that live there.

The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA is located in a cold climate, and yet it is still a desert. It only gets about 20 cm (8 in) of moisture a year, most of which falls as snow during the winter. This area is so dry because it is located near two mountain ranges—the Cascade Mountains to the

west and the Oregon Coast Range even farther west along the Pacific Ocean—in an area called a rain shadow. On the ocean side of the mountains, plenty of rain and snow fall throughout the year. But both these mountain ranges block moisture that moves in from the ocean, so the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA stays dry.

Find the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA on the map below. Look at the pictures surrounding the map. Where are you likely to find these—on the wet side of the mountains or in the rain shadow? Draw a line from each picture to the place where it belongs.




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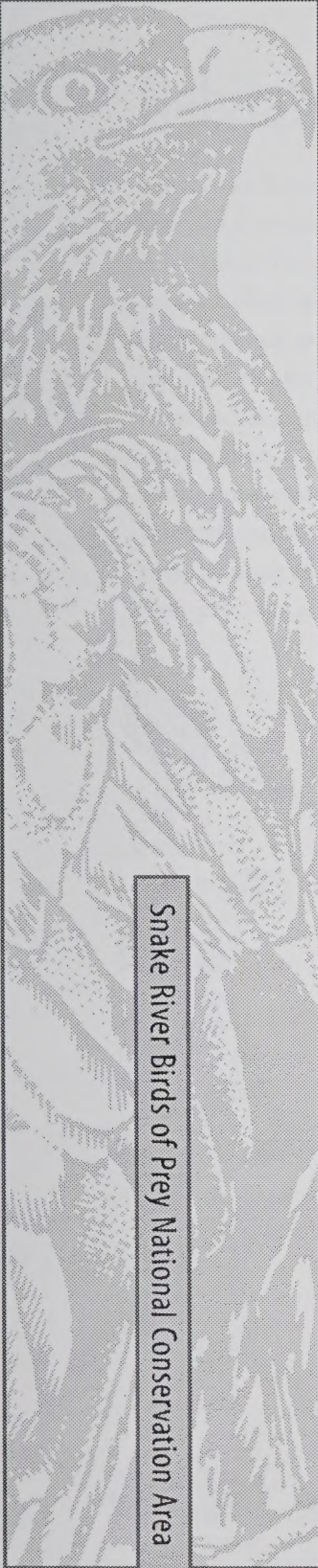








## Plants, Animals, and Wildland Fire



On your travels through the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, you may come across some areas that have burned in recent years. Wildland fires can be caused by nature, such as from lightning strikes, or by careless people. Because it is dry and often windy here, wildland fires can spread very quickly. In the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, wildland fires have burned more than half of the native plants—those that grow naturally in the area. When native plants are destroyed by fire, nonnative

plants often grow in their place. Some nonnative plants, like cheatgrass, burn very easily, making the fire danger even worse. Also, many animals that depend on native plants can be in great danger when their food and shelter are lost to fire.

Below is a list of some important fire safety rules that everyone should follow while they are here. Some words are missing—see if you can fill in the blanks from the word bank below.

1. When camping, use a stove instead of building a \_\_\_\_\_ to cook your food.
2. Did you know that parts of an engine can reach 1,000 degrees? That is why all motor vehicles need to stay on existing \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If you must build a fire, make a fire pan from a metal trash can lid, an unused oil pan, or the bottom of a barbecue \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Always keep a shovel and \_\_\_\_\_ handy, in case a fire becomes wild or out of control.
5. Do not build campfires when it is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Make sure only an adult handles \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Never leave a campfire \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Any adult who smokes must \_\_\_\_\_ of smoking materials properly.

### Word Bank

campfire  
roads

dispose  
unattended

grill  
water

matches  
windy

SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA









# Habitat Matchup

The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA provides a wonderful habitat for raptors. A habitat is the place where an animal lives—a place where it can find the food, water, shelter, and space it needs. Raptors can find plenty of places to build their nests and raise their young in the cracks and crevices of the canyon. The dry area above the canyon, with its deep layer of fine soil, creates perfect homes for many small animals that the raptors eat. The river provides a water source, and many

plants and animals that depend on water can be found near the river in an area called the riparian zone.

As you can see, the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA provides habitat for many animals. Below is a picture showing some places in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA where animals find shelter. To the right are pictures of some of the animals that live in these places. Draw a line from each animal to the place where it is likely to live.



prairie falcon



fish



ground squirrel



rabbit



lizard



bullfrog



rock



sagebrush



burrow



wetland



river



treetop/snag



cliff wall



osprey



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also outlines the methodology used in the study and the results obtained. The second part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research. It also outlines the limitations of the study and the areas for further research.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting and the results were compared with those obtained from previous studies. The study found that the results were consistent with those obtained from previous studies and that the methodology used in the study was valid. The study also found that the results were consistent with those obtained from previous studies and that the methodology used in the study was valid.



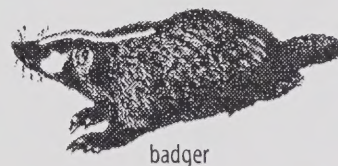


## Burrow Borrowing

At the Dedication Point Interpretive Site, you can see signs of animals that live here. Many live in the grasses and shrubs. Still others live in burrows—homes that they dig in the ground. The area has finely textured soil deposited by the wind, known as loess, which is easy for animals to dig. Even so, some animals prefer to move into existing burrows rather than dig their own. So the animal that lives in a particular burrow may not be the one that first dug it. For example, a burrow can start out being the

home of a tiny ground squirrel, but then a badger might move in, and later, perhaps a burrowing owl.

Look carefully at any burrows you discover. Note the size of the entrance hole. Never reach inside, touch, or stand on top of the holes because you never know who might be home, and be sure to leave the area as you found it. Once you've examined several holes, take a look at the drawings below. Draw a line from each animal to its burrow.



badger



rattle snake



ground squirrel









## Try This!

Can you find another animal home that is not a burrow? If so, draw a picture of it below.



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## The Better to Eat You With

Raptors are different from other birds because of their hooked beaks, keen eyesight, and sharp talons (claws). Their beaks and talons are especially suited to grabbing and eating prey. In fact, the word raptor comes from a Latin word that means to seize or capture. Other birds use their feet and beaks in different ways.

### Beaks

The size and shape of a bird's beak helps determine how it will search for food and the types of food it will eat. In column A, you will find pictures of bird beaks. Column B lists the names of some familiar birds, while column C lists ways in which birds get the food they need. Draw a line from the beak in column A to the name of the bird in column B to the way it eats in column C.

#### Column A



#### Column B

Snail kite

Mallard duck

House finch

Black-chinned hummingbird

Hairy woodpecker

American kestrel

#### Column C

probes for insects in trees

tears flesh of small animals

strains food from lake bottom

sips nectar from flowers

probes inside snail shells

cracks seeds

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## Feet

The size and shape of a bird's feet help to determine where it may live, how it may move, and possibly, what it may eat.

Match columns A, B, and C below in the same way you matched them above.

### Column A



### Column B

Great horned owl

Trumpeter swan

Steller's jay

Ostrich

Penguin

### Column C

swims through water

perches on branches of trees

runs instead of flying

perches on branches of trees

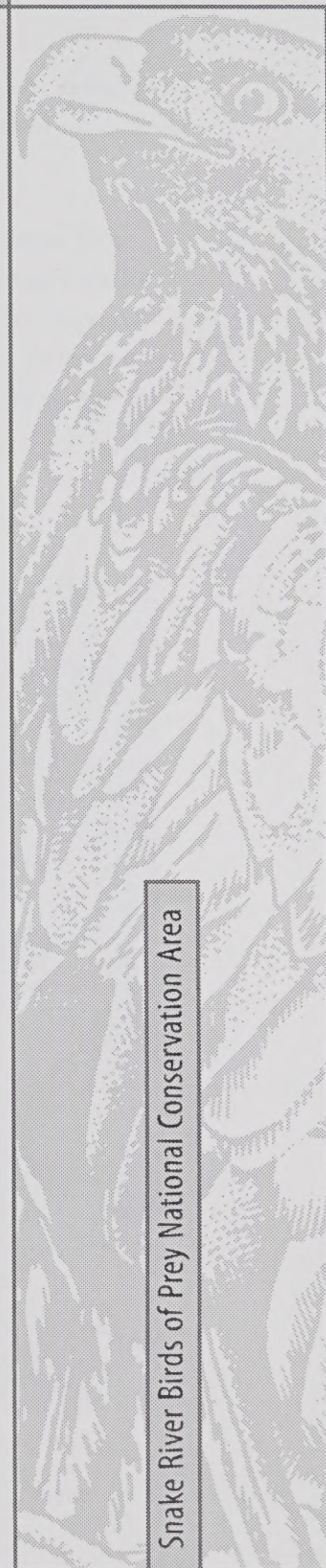
grabs small animals

## Shaping the Surface of the Earth

The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA is a great example of how wind and water can shape the surface of the Earth. But even before the Snake River began carving the canyon, volcanoes were at work here. In fact, the canyon itself began with volcanic activity some 2 million years ago. Much of the dark-colored rock that you see is called

basalt, and it came from volcanoes. There are other signs of volcanic activity here, too. Can you find anything in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA that looks like the cone of a volcano?

What about signs of a flood? About 15,000 years ago, a huge flood (known as

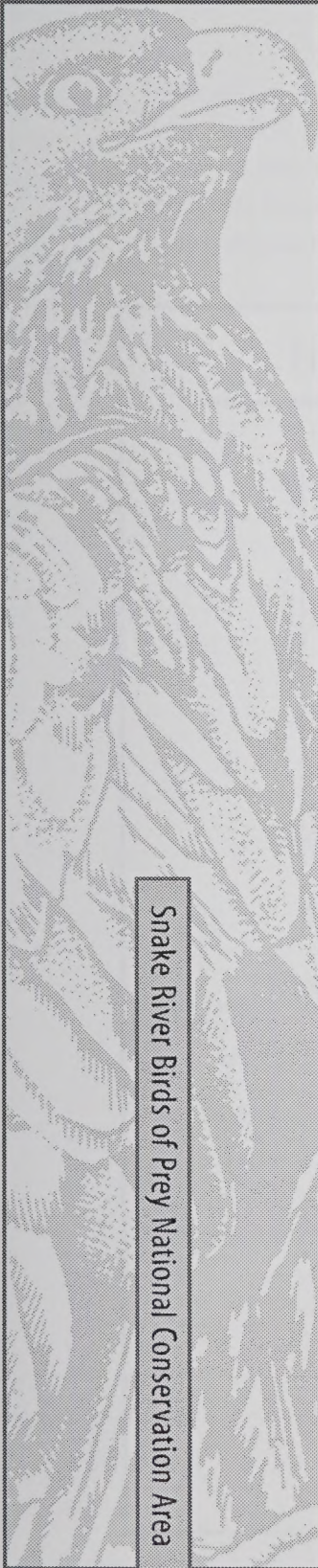


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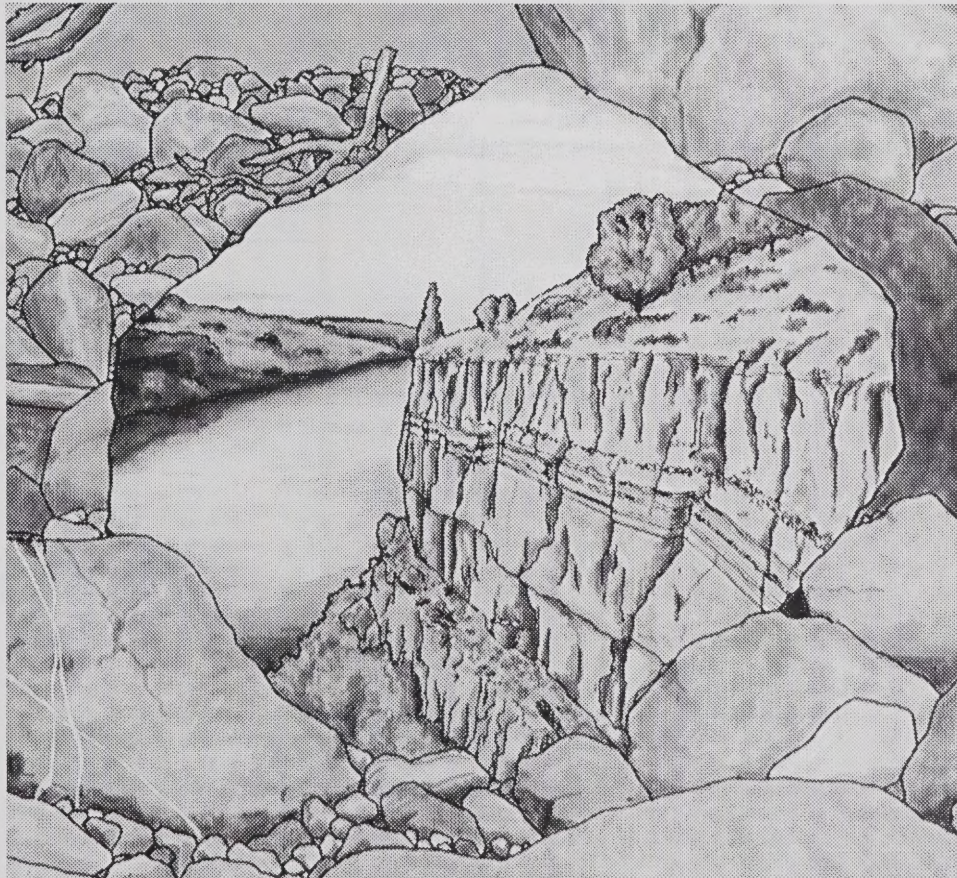
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the Bonneville flood) swept through the Snake River canyon. The force of the water was so great that jagged rocks became smooth. Even today, jagged rocks continue to form as water freezes and thaws in the cracks of the cliffs. Can you see signs that freezing and thawing have been at work?

Wind has also played a role in creating the upland plateau—the dry land above the river and canyon. The deep layer of finely

textured soil on the plateau was deposited by wind. Can you see any signs of wind-blown soils?

Below is a drawing of the Snake River canyon at the NCA. The word bank lists some geologic forces that can shape the Earth's surface. Draw a line from each of these words to an area in the canyon that was affected by this force.



Word Bank

freezing and thawing

water

wind



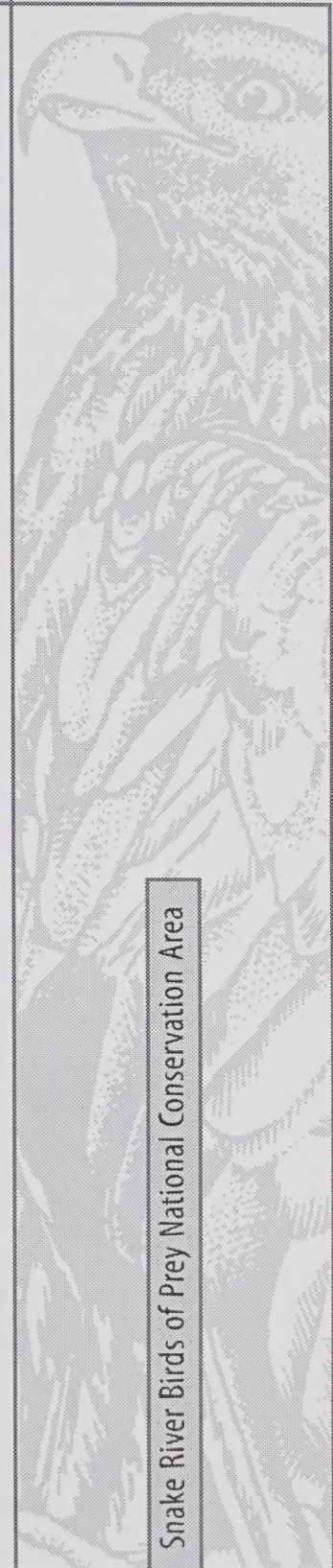
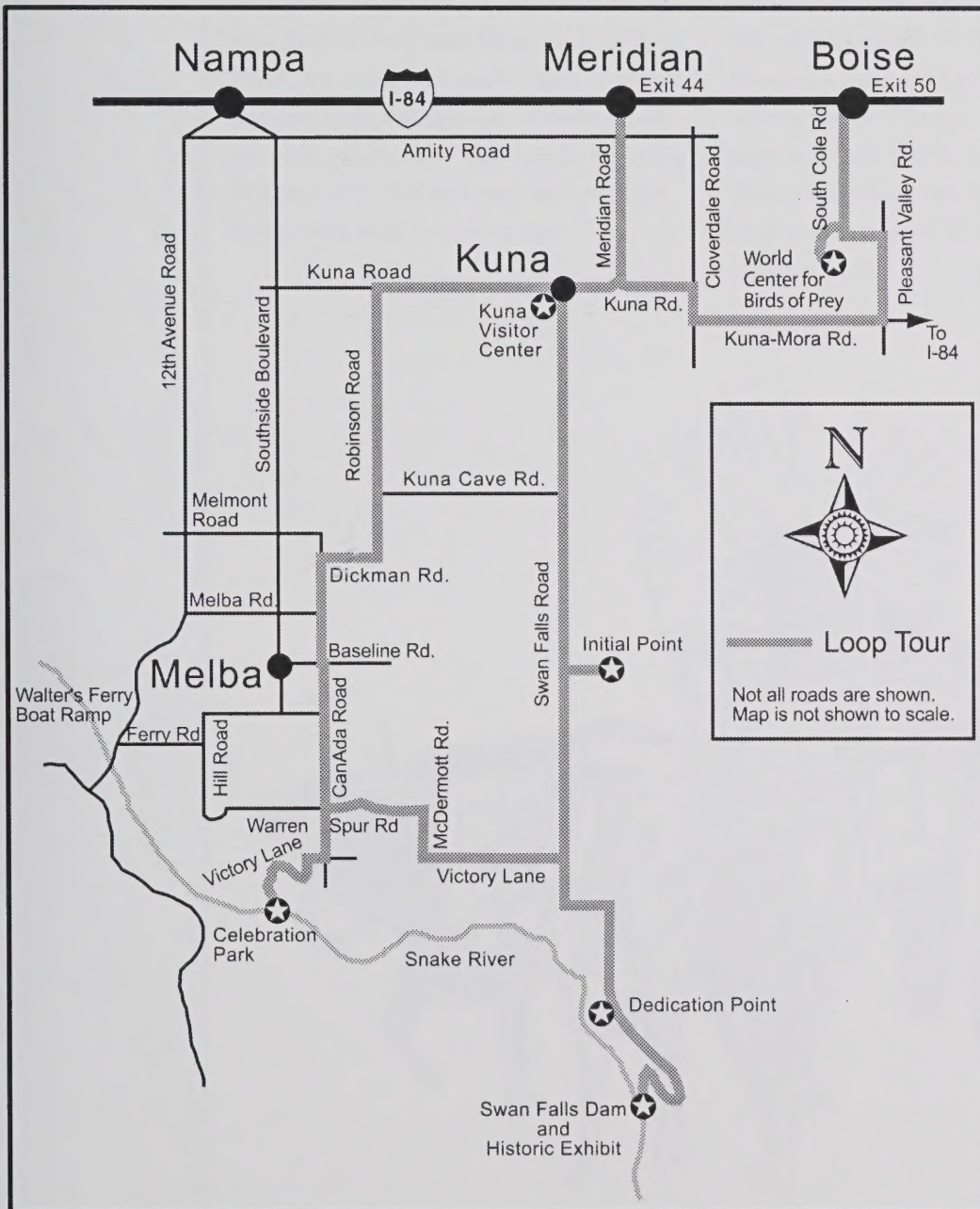






Many special land features of the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA can be found on the access map (below). Visit Initial Point and Sinker Butte to see old extinct volcanoes. Visit Dedication Point Interpretive Site to

see wind-blown soils. While there, be sure to hike down to the canyon overlook and peer over the rim to see jagged and smooth rocks. If time permits, visit Halverson Lakes to see sand dunes.



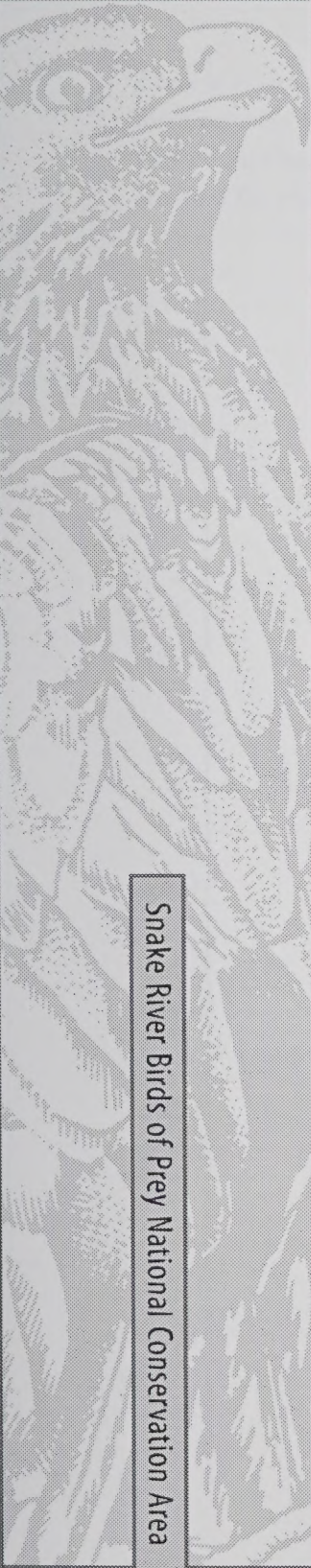
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## Hunting for History



People have lived in the area of the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA for thousands of years. We know this from their writings and from things they left behind. During your visit to the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, try to see how many signs of people you can find. You may see telephone poles or roads, which show that people are using this area now. But you may also see signs that people lived here long ago.

At least 5,000 years ago, Native Americans passed through the area. They were hunters who set up camps here and left evidence in the form of petroglyphs (rock carvings). We call this period of time prehistoric because it occurred before people began writing words. There is also evidence of some activities that took place in this area during historic times. People wrote about these events and left behind evidence of a different kind.



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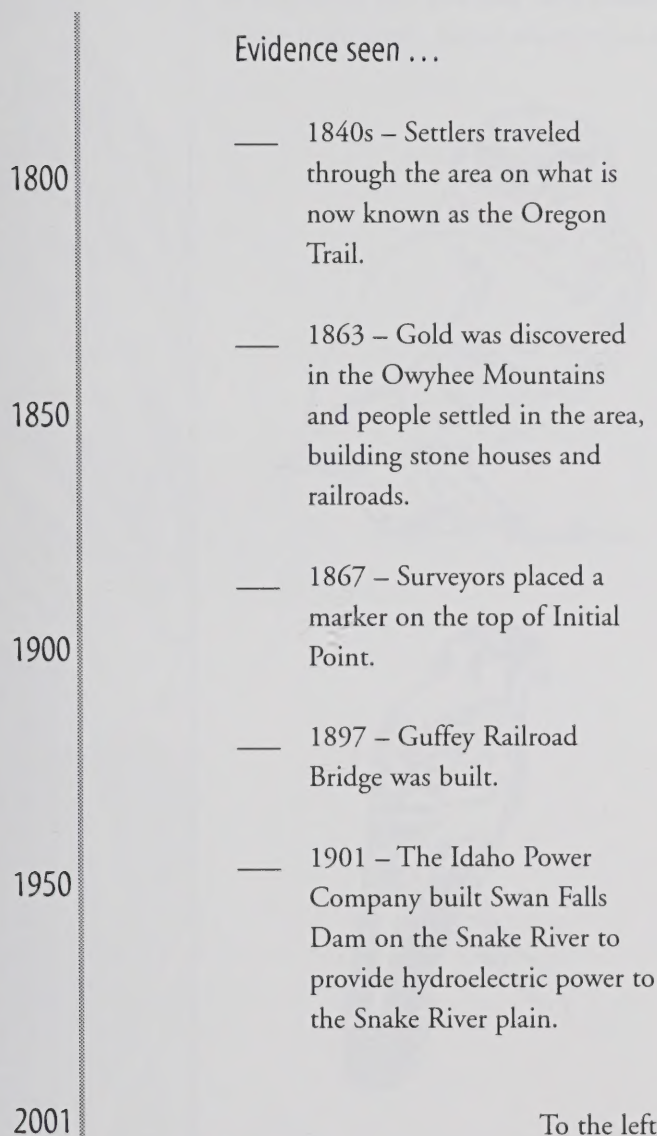






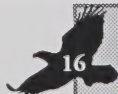
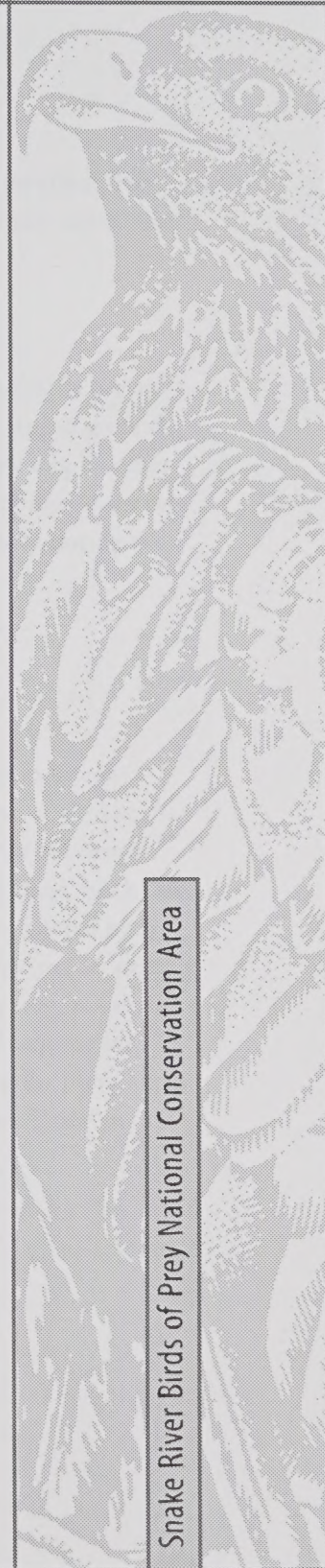
There is evidence of each of the activities listed below in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. Place a check (@) next to those activities for which you find evidence.

While you are "hunting for history," be sure you do not touch or collect any evidence of items that may have been left behind.



Write a discription or illustrate the evidence you can find.

To the left is a timeline showing about 200 years. Draw a line from each of the events above to its proper place on the timeline. Add another important event—the year you were born—to the timeline too.







## Who Am I?

There are so many birds of prey nesting in and passing through the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA that you may have trouble telling them apart. Below are pictures and

descriptions containing clues about five raptors. Write the name of the raptor next to its description.



1. My color is a mix of chocolate brown and white. I am a long-legged ground dweller. I live in burrows dug by other animals. Unlike many of my closest relatives, I may hunt for prey during the day. Who am I?

\_\_\_\_\_

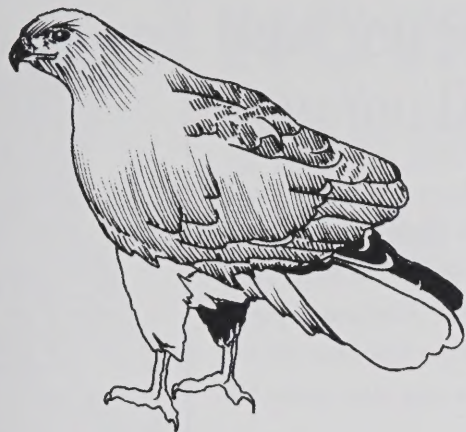


2. I am the smallest falcon in North America—about the size of a robin. As a male, my color is a mix of blueish wings, a black-streaked chest, black tail bands, and a cinnamon-colored body. I have dark vertical stripes (malar) near my eyes. My wings are long, pointed, and angle backward to help me hover in the air when hunting for prey. When I hover, I look like I am "flying in place." Who am I?

\_\_\_\_\_







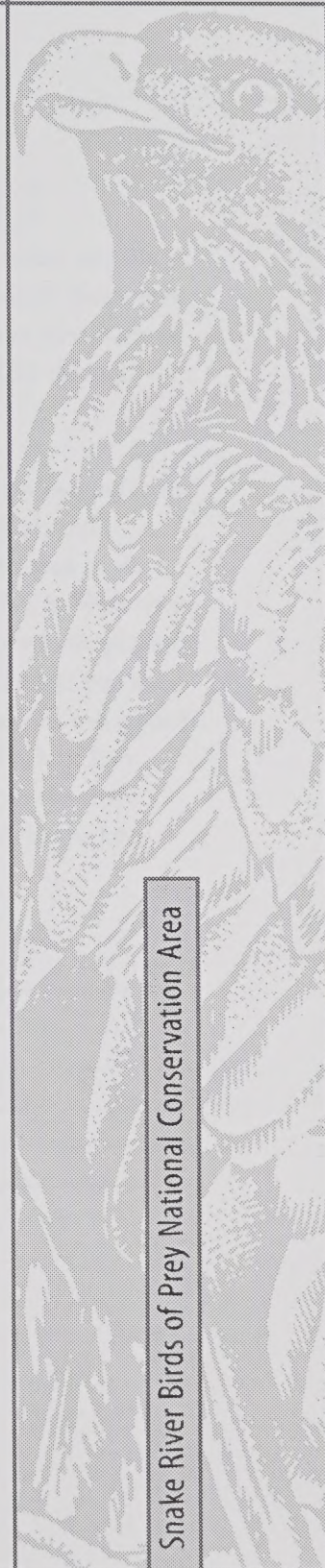
3. I have broad wings for flying high in the sky. My wings help me to soar for long periods without flapping. When looking for prey, I often perch on a high spot—a tree, fencepost or power pole—and watch for movement in the grass and brush below. I eat all kinds of small animals, but I especially like rodents. I am known for my red tail. Who am I? \_\_\_\_\_



4. I have dark brown feathers on my body, though I get my name from the lighter colored feathers on my head. In flight, my long, broad wings look like they have "fingers" at the ends. I hunt by soaring through the air and looking for small mammals, birds, and carrion (animals that are already dead). Who am I? \_\_\_\_\_



5. I am light brown in color, with a streaked breast and dark brown feathers on the underside of my wings in the "armpits." I have a faint stripe under each eye. I hunt for prey in different ways. I can even dive down and knock another flying bird out of the air. My long, pointed wings help me to have rapid wingbeats and high-speed dives. Who am I? \_\_\_\_\_



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## Now You See Them, Now You Don't

Raptors depend on other animals for food. They are more likely to come to the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA when their food supply is available. This helps explain why you can see some raptors here year-round and others only part of the year.

The favorite food of golden eagles is the black-tailed jackrabbit, which is active year-round. The favorite food of prairie falcons, however, is the Paiute ground squirrel (also known as the whistle pig). The Paiute ground squirrel lives in underground burrows and feeds mostly on grasses and flowers. But because of the hot, dry weather during the summer months, most

of the grasses and flowers wither and die by late July. As their food supply disappears, whistle pigs begin to return to their burrows. They hibernate from late July through mid-January.

The chart below shows when two different prey species—ground squirrels and jackrabbits—are likely to be seen in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. With what you have learned about the whistle pig and jackrabbit, can you predict when you are most likely to see prairie falcons and golden eagles in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA? Mark your guesses on the chart, adding appropriate symbols to the key.

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

### Animal species

### Time of Year

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ground squirrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Jackrabbit	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Prairie falcon												
Golden eagle												

### Key

- Paiute ground squirrel  
\*\*\*\* Black-tailed jackrabbit









## Try This!

Most Paiute ground squirrels have babies in mid-March. The babies begin to come out of their burrows in early April to feed. What would be a good time for prairie falcon eggs to begin hatching? Why?

## A Place for People Too

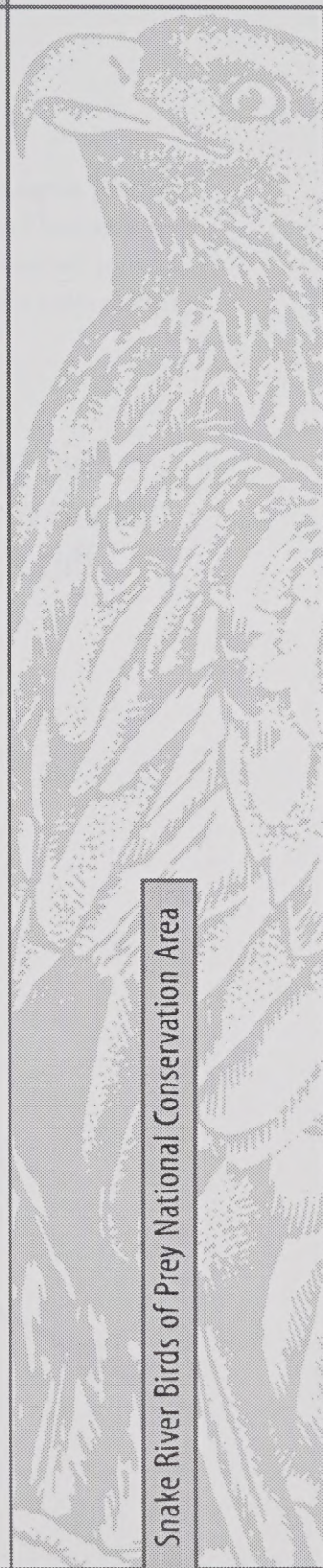
The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA has been called "a place like no other" for raptors, but it is also a wonderful place for people. Here is a list of many ways in which

people use the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. Can you find these words in the puzzle below? The words may appear horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backward.



### Word Bank

Agriculture	Camping	Hiking	Photography
Biking	Education	horseback riding	Picnicking
Birdwatching	Fishing	Hunting	Power generation
Boating	Grazing	Military training	Research



Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area









## For the Birds

Haiku is a Japanese form of verse that is often used to describe objects in nature. A haiku does not rhyme and it has only three lines: the first has five syllables, the second has seven, and the third has five.

by writing a haiku about a raptor you have seen during your visit here. Then draw a picture of the raptor that inspired your haiku. Below is a sample of a haiku showing the syllable breaks.

As you've been exploring in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, you have probably learned a lot about birds of prey. You might even have seen a few raptors perched or flying high overhead. Now it is your turn to share what you have learned

Fal-con fly-ing high  
Soar-ing a-lone in the sun  
Nest-ing in a cliff

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area









# Leave No Trace: Outdoor Ethics at the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA

The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA was set aside by Congress in 1993 to preserve a special place for raptors. Visitors can help preserve this place by treating all of its resources with respect and following the Leave No Trace (LNT) rules listed below. Fill in the blanks using the secret decoder key to find out what you can do to help.

PLAN \_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_  
1 8 5 1 4 16 18 5 16 1 18 5

CAMP ON \_\_\_\_\_ SURFACES  
8 1 18 4

\_\_\_\_\_ IT IN, PACK \_\_\_\_\_  
16 1 3 11 9 20 15 21 20

LEAVE WHAT YOU \_\_\_\_\_  
6 9 14 4

BE \_\_\_\_\_ WITH \_\_\_\_\_  
3 1 18 5 6 21 12 6 9 18 5

\_\_\_\_\_ 18 5 19 16 5 3 20 23 9 12 4 12 9 6 5

BE

\_\_\_\_\_ OF OTHERS  
3 15 14 19 9 4 5 18 1 20 5

Well done! Now on the next page, draw a picture of yourself practicing one of the

above LNT rules in the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA.









## You're Almost There!

When you have finished the required number of activities in this booklet, take it to a Snake River Birds of Prey NCA staff

person or volunteer. They will ask you to read and sign your name to the following pledge:

As a BLM Junior Explorer of the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, I promise to do all I can to protect the Snake River Birds of Prey Area by:

- ❖ *Learning about the area and sharing what I know with others;*
- ❖ *Learning about and protecting the natural, historic, and prehistoric resources of the area;*
- ❖ *Helping to teach others about the resource values of the area;*
- ❖ *Helping to keep the area clean and litter free;*
- ❖ *Leaving wildlife and other resources alone (safe and secure) for others to enjoy;*
- ❖ *Reporting acts of wrongdoing to a staff person or volunteer of the area; and*
- ❖ *Telling others how they, too, can become a BLM Jr. Explorer of the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA.*

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Signature of BLM Jr. Explorer of the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA

## Congratulations!

Be sure to get your certificate signed and to collect your Jr. Explorer badge and other gifts that may be available.

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area





*I certify that Junior Explorer*

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Name

*has successfully completed the  
Junior Explorer Program  
at Snake River  
Birds of Prey  
National Conservation Area*



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BLM Official

Date

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area







## Answers to Activity Pages

### Page 4—Flying High

- 1 - E
- 2 - A
- 3 - B
- 4 - D
- 5 - C

### Page 6—A Desert? Here?

Salamanders are likely to be found in a wet climate; kangaroo rats are more likely to be found in a dry climate.

### Page 7—Plants, Animals, and Wildland Fire

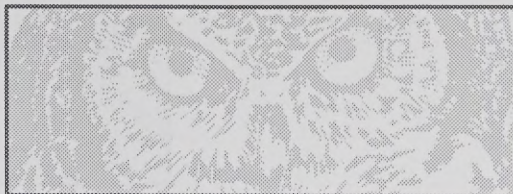
- 1. campfire
- 2. roads
- 3. grill
- 4. water
- 5. windy
- 6. matches
- 7. unattended
- 8. dispose

### Page 8—Habitat Matchup

- Sagebrush - rabbit
- Rock - lizard
- Burrow - ground squirrel
- Cliff wall - prairie falcon
- Treetop/snag - osprey
- Wetland - bullfrog
- River - fish







#### Page 9–Burrow Borrowing

- 1 - C
- 2 - B
- 3 - A

#### Page 11–The Better to Eat You With

##### Beaks

- 1 belongs to black-chinned hummingbird which sips nectar from flowers
- 2 belongs to hairy woodpecker which probes for insects in trees
- 3 belongs to snail kite which probes inside snail shells
- 4 belongs to mallard duck which strains food from lake bottom
- 5 belongs to american kestrel which tears flesh of small animals
- 6 belongs to house finch which cracks seeds

##### Feet

- 1 belongs to a Steller's jay which perches on branches of trees
- 2 belongs to a penguin which walks or swims instead of flying
- 3 belongs to a great horned owl which grabs small animals
- 4 belongs to a trumpeter swan which swims though the water
- 5 belongs to an ostrich which runs instead of flying

#### Page 13–Shaping the Surface of the Earth

Canyon was formed by water

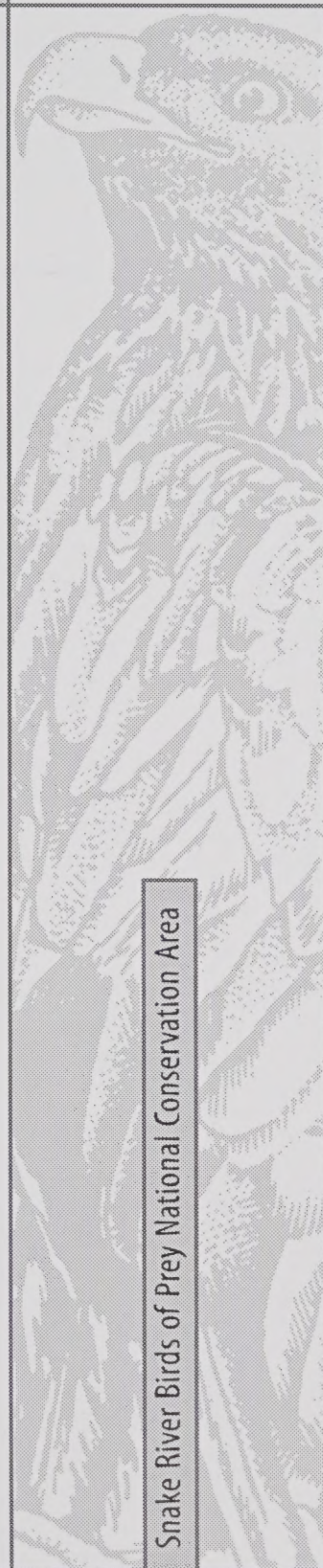
Canyon wall's jagged rocks were formed by freezing and thawing

Smooth rocks on canyon floor were formed by water

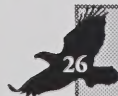
Soil on upland plateau was deposited by wind

#### Page 17-18–Who Am I?

- 1. Burrowing owl
- 2. American kestrel
- 3. Red-tailed hawk
- 4. Golden eagle
- 5. Prairie falcon



Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area









### Page 19—Now You See Them, Now You Don't

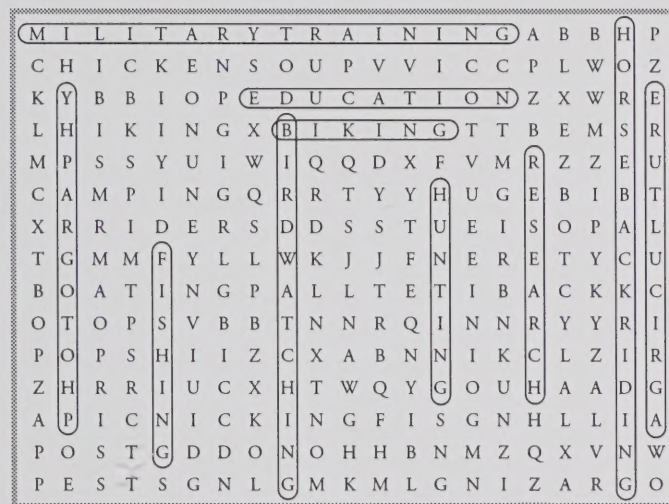
Prairie falcon is as active from January through July.

Golden eagle is likely to be seen year-round.

### Page 20—Try This!

Prairie falcon eggs begin hatching in April to take advantage of the more abundant prey.

### Page 20—A Place for People Too



### Page 22—Leave No Trace

1. Plan AHEAD and PREPARE.
2. Camp on HARD surfaces.
3. PACK it in, pack IT OUT.
4. Leave what you FIND.
5. Be CAREFUL with FIRE.
6. RESPECT WILDLIFE.
7. Be CONSIDERATE of others.

